

Simple, Complex, and Compound Sentences

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Dependent & Independent Clauses

To distinguish between simple, complex, or compound sentences, it is important to know what independent and dependent clauses are.

- independent clause - can stand on its own as a sentence
- dependent clause - cannot stand on its own as a sentence

*Try saying the dependent clause (out loud) on its own;
does it **sound** like a complete thought?*

- **Sentences can be simple, complex, or compound**

A simple sentence has one independent clause

A complex sentence has one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses

A compound sentence joins two independent clauses

A Simple Sentence

has **one independent clause** with **one or more subjects** (**nouns**), and one or more **predicates** (**verbs**).

expresses a complete thought

For example, "The dog sat."

Or, "The dog and cat ate and sat."

A Compound Sentence

- To make a compound sentence, join two independent clauses, or sentences that could stand on their own, and separate them with a **comma and a conjunction** (like **and, or, but, so, yet**, etc.) or a **semicolon (;)**.
- For example, "I was too busy to play, **so** he went outside without me."
 - "**so**" is the conjunction that joins the two independent clauses
- In, "The game ended; our team lost."
 - the semicolon (**;**) joins the two independent clauses

A Complex Sentence

- has one **independent clause** which can stand on its own as a sentence **AND** one or more **dependent clauses** which cannot stand on their own
- Words like **because**, **when**, or **after** might indicate a complex sentence

For example, in "When I walked downstairs, I had a big surprise," which is the **independent clause** and which is the **dependent clause**?

- *I had a big surprise* is the **independent** clause because it could stand on its own.
- *When I walked downstairs* is the **dependent** clause because it is not a complete sentence on its own.

Here are a couple more examples of complex sentences. The dependent clause is in blue:

- After the big storm, the neighbors helped pick up branches.
- Because I didn't clean my room, I wasn't allowed to watch television.

The end.

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